

How NOT To Become A Contagious Christian

(adapted from the Bill Hybels book, Becoming a Contagious Christian)

Introduction:

If you go on the internet you find many “how to” books, guide, pamphlets, outlines, etc:

How to become a Christian - now that’s good!

How to become a genius - now that’s impossible

How to be a Fruitarian (like a vegetarian, except with fruits)

How to be enlightened

How to become a computer hacker

How to become a storm chaser

There’s even a website devoted to people who’ve already become

Scapegoats - as the authors say: Scapegoating is a discrediting routine

by which people move blame and responsibility away from themselves

and towards a target person or group.

Our question tonight comes from a book Bill Hybels has written --

Section 1: Why Become a CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIAN? -- well,
because Pastor Mackey and Pastor Dan said so:
No because ...

Chapter 1: People Matter To God --” but not to me!” (1 Cor. 12:18-25)

“75% of people who became Christians have done so through a relationship built by a friend, work colleague or family member.”

Chapter 2: The Rewards of Contagious Christianity --

“He’ll make my life boring!” (*John 10:10; Heb. 13:5*)

Are you content with your Christian life?

It’s often not that the Christian life is boring, but that we are so frustrated! We know it’s the most significant thing we can do and that sharing it is the most important gift we could ever give to a friend. Yet evangelism remains one of the most frustrating parts of the Christian life. (*Zondervan*)

Chapter 3: A Formula For Impacting Your World -

“It’s the preachers job to come up with the bright ideas!” (*Eph. 4:11-12*)

Section 2: The Prerequisite of HIGH POTENCY

Chapter 4: The Attractiveness of Authenticity -

“I should ‘act out’ being a Christian, even if I don’t actually live it out.”

- a. “I’m really blessed in the Lord!” “Fine” (*Matt. 6:1*)
- b. “Whatever!” (*Rev. 3:16*)

Lukewarmness - application- “Why is it that many start at John 3:16 and end at Rev. 3:16?

- c. “Christians can’t have those kind of problems!”

Rev. Walt Gerber, a Presbyterian pastor has said this:

- when we finally stop bragging to God and others about what we have achieved and possess in this world...and become aware of how far we have missed the goals Jesus outlines in this Sermon
- when we realize we need divine grace to ever break with our addictions to self, to winning, possessing, consuming.
- when we realize that Christianity is not about achieving and being rewarded by God, but its about trusting and receiving divine grace, when we know we don't deserve it.
- when we realize that caring for people is the primary business of the Christian...then Jesus says: "Blessed are you!"

Chapter 5: The Pull of Compassion -- "They got themselves into this, now let them get themselves out of it!"

Illustration:

"Ky. couple takes in ex-sex offender. After 20 years in prison, 52 year old Nate Sims was taken in by Mark and Tammy LaPalme, self-described, "baby Christians", who explained that they were out to test their faith ."He and his wife asked themselves the question printed on a pink and yellow cloth bracelet that she wears: 'What Would Jesus Do?'. The neighbors somehow found out, leaflets went up, the television show "Extra" sent a camera crew, and as Mark LaPalme said, ' They drove him out of here' Tammy LaPalme added: 'What are we supposed to do? Just ignore him and lock our doors?'" Good question - huh??

(Eph. 4:32) /

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you”

WWJD -- What would Jesus do?

The other extreme is to take on burdens that God never for us to take on. We are to bear one another's burdens (the heavy loads that are unbearable), but each man must bear his own load (the normal day-to-day burdens)

*(compare with **Boundaries** - a book that helps us sort out the problems of confusing our personal responsibility to others with their paternal reliance upon us)*

Chapter 6: The Strength of Sacrifice -- “what’s in it for me?” (Titus 2:11-12)

Section 3: The Potential of CLOSE PROXIMITY

Chapter 7: Strategic Opportunities in Relationships -

“So, I missed the opportunity!” (2 Cor. 5:20)

We need to be motivated not by guilt, but by love for sinners!

Bill Hybels, commenting on Jesus style of sharing in John 4 says this:

This might surprise you. **You've probably thought of communicating your faith as an important obligation, something you may feel guilty about not doing more.** But until you really dive in, you won't realize that extending Christ to others can give your relationship with Him an exciting sense of the unexpected.

God gets great pleasure from sending His agents on secret reconnaissance missions with personal instructions no one else knows about. He loves to stretch us beyond our comfort zones and challenge us to take risks on the front lines of His Kingdom-advancement enterprises.

He delights in giving us action-on-the-edge where, with white knuckles, we'll cling to Him as He takes us on the spiritual ride of our lives. The thrilling part is that He does this to help us grow as well as to spread His love to more and more wayward people.

In other words, the Christian life is one of faith, where we find ourselves routinely overdriving our headlights but knowing it's okay because God is in control and has a purpose behind it.

Does this image excite you? If not, it might be a sign that you've been playing it safe in your spiritual life. Maybe it's time to take steps toward becoming a more contagious Christian, one God can use in His exciting search-and-rescue mission.

From Becoming A Contagious Christian by Bill Hybels

Chapter 8: Rubbing Shoulders with Irreligious People --

“Avoid those sinners!” (*1 Cor. 6. :9-11*)

Chapter 9: Finding the Approach that Fits You --

“We should all do ministry the ‘church way’ (*1 Cor. 12:4-6*)

Section 4: The Power of CLEAR COMMUNICATION

Chapter 10: Starting Spiritual Conversations --

“Wait for them to ask, if they’re really interested!” (*Romans 10:14-15*)

Chapter 11: Making the Message Clear -

“Tell them about baptism, hymns vs. choruses, assign them to a

committee, “have you been washed in the blood?” --
“Oh, they’ve just got to stop sinning or Jesus won’t accept them!!” (Acts 16:31 - “believe”)

Chapter 12: Breaking the Barriers to Belief -

“Treat them all the same, no exceptions!”

{“Don’t water down that Gospel”}

(The issue is not message but methods) (I Cor. 9:22 and I Cor. 10:33)

We all must do it the same way!

Their emphasis is clear: be yourself in Christ, find a style that works for you. Hybels and Mittelberg use simple, straightforward language and diverse biblical characters such as Peter, Paul, Dorcas, and the Samaritan woman to encourage us with the good news that God knew what he was doing when he made each of us. As a result, all of us can impact our world for Christ. *(Zondervan)*

Section 5: The Payoff: MAXIMUM IMPACT

Chapter 13: Crossing the Line of Faith --

“Be unrealistic about any future Christian struggles. .

Just get them saved! -- It’s not *really* lying!”

(Romans 1:16 -- “keep on believing”)

Chapter 14: Contagious Christians and Contagious Churches --

that’s why we hired Pastor Dan!! *(Eph. 4:11-12)*

It won’t work in the ‘90’s!

“...effectively communicating our faith in Jesus Christ should be the most natural thing in the world. What we need, however, is encouragement and direction.

(Zondervan) Pastor Dan is here to show us how to effectively be available for evangelism, not to bring the people in himself!

Chapter 15: Investing Your Life in People -- "But what about ME!"

(1 Peter 4:2; Luke 14:33; Matt: 10:38; Gal. 5:24;

(Eph. 4:22; *Romans 12:1-2*; Luke 18:28-30)

Closing remarks

Oswald Chambers wrote:

God has to bring us to the end of our self sufficiency, before he can use us...It is not a question of our equipment, but of our poverty...It's not what we bring with us, but of what God puts in us. God uses those who know their poverty. He can do nothing with the person who thinks he can be of use to God...The most we can offer God is to maintain an intimate relationship with him.

Endnotes